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USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
20 August 1962
Limited Distribution

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
SUBJECT: Proposed U-2 Reconnaissance Program for China

On instruction of the Chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has prepared the attached paper for consideration of the Board. The paper reviews the needs for U-2 reconnaissance of strategic targets in Communist China as well as the needs for coverage of the Taiwan Straits area, a matter of particular current concern to the Secretary of Defense.

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James Q. Reber
Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment:
Subject Paper

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GROUP 1
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PROPOSED U-2 RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM FOR CHINA

1. On 27 June 1962 the United States Intelligence Board considered and approved comprehensive overhead photo reconnaissance requirements for Communist China including targets of strategic interest and targets of immediate concern to the North Vietnam and Formosa Straits situations (See USIB-D-41.5/6; COMOR-D-2/18). This was prepared by the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance by direction of the United States Intelligence Board and in pursuance of a request by the Secretary of Defense for the preparation of such a program. The requirements program was then noted at a meeting of the Special Group.

2. Subsequently, the Special Group considered a substantive review of the situations in Communist China, North Vietnam and Cuba and the contribution which overhead reconnaissance had made to an appreciation of the situations in those areas. This review (see COMOR-D-60) was prepared by the DDI/CIA and concurred in by the COMOR. On 30 July the Special Group approved the following China missions for August:

- a. One mission over North East China.

25X1A

USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Attachment

- b. One mission in late August over the Formosa Straits area. (Requiring Justification)
- c. One mission over South China.
- d. One mission over North Vietnam.

3. The following is a status report on U-2 reconnaissance since 26 July (the occasion of the last appraisal of U-2 reconnaissance results over China):

a. Mission 123 over the Straits area was carried out in the best weather which we have had available since the beginning of the Straits crisis, although even that was confined to certain areas which did not permit comprehensive coverage of the targets simultaneously.

b. Mission 125 was conducted over most of the remaining targets which still remained after the earlier Northeast Mission 112. This photography was processed in the ☐ and a full analysis has not yet been completed.

c. Since April, because of adverse weather conditions, there has been no coverage of South China even though missions were authorized.

d. Because of bad weather there has been no

25X1A

USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Attachment

mission carried out over North Vietnam since the once a month approval by the Special Group on 2 August.

4. The Special Group has approved in principle several sorties to cover strategic targets in China. The understanding was that subsequent to the Northeast China mission the COMOR would present the requirements for an additional mission or missions. This has been done and is set forth at Tab B.

5. The Special Group has also approved in principle a mission over the Straits area in late August, it being understood that specific justification and approval would be required. Subsequently the Secretary of Defense has raised his requirement and has recommended weekly coverage of the Taiwan Strait area. The COMOR has considered this requirement and its recommendation is set forth as Tab A.

6. The Director of Central Intelligence, in requesting COMOR to prepare this paper, has requested an outline of a six-month program. As of this date this is accomplished in the presentation in Tabs A and B. COMOR recognizes that such a program must be validated from time to time and therefore must be subject to continuing review.

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USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)

7. The following summarizes the proposed program for U-2 reconnaissance over China for the next six months:

September: One mission to cover the Szechwan Basin.
One mission to monitor the Taiwan Strait area.

October through February:

One mission a month to achieve complete coverage of strategic Communist Chinese targets and to meet the requirements for periodic updating.
One mission a month to monitor the Taiwan Strait area.

8. In addition, in order to achieve complete coverage of the targets in South China and North Vietnam on a bimonthly basis one mission each month will be required over each area.

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USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Tab A

Proposed Use of U-2 Reconnaissance
over the Taiwan Strait Area

1. The Chinese Communist military buildup in the Foochow Military Region was reported during the first two weeks of June. Furthermore, it now appears that the units are more widely dispersed within the Foochow Military Region than originally believed. Photo coverage has not yet been able to detect the concentration of military strength in the Taiwan Strait area nor disclosed preparations for an assault against the offshore islands. It has thus far from all sources not been possible to determine the extent nor the intent of the reported deployment. It is possible that photography of areas suggested but not yet covered will provide data on the deployment.

2. In considering the use of the U-2 to meet our needs in the Taiwan Strait area, it is recognized that even daily U-2 coverage would not provide the early warning which this Government desires. In addition, it should be noted that processing and readout of U-2 photography in the field requires

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USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Tab A

on the order of 30 hours. The U-2 can provide a base of information
with regard to air, sea, and ground forces and installations. So
far such a base has not been procured of the coastal area from
Swatow to San Tu Bay.

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3. Once a base is established, it is the view of the
COMOR that U-2 photography can be usefully employed in two
ways:

a. A comprehensive periodic mission which
might be on the order of once per month, and

b. A limited or comprehensive mission
prompted by information obtained from collateral
sources or in particular by
photography.

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3515-62

USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Tab A

4. Recommendation: That approval be given for

a. Immediate coverage of the following areas (which in good weather might be covered in a single mission):

(1) The coastal areas from Swatow to San Tu Bay on a single mission;

(2) Inland areas for search of military deployment and any land lines in the Foochow Military Region.

b. A mission once each month to cover the Taiwan Strait area comprehensively as a means of periodic check-up (approval for each month would be by means of the CIA Monthly Forecast).

c. A limited or comprehensive mission prompted by information from collateral sources (approval for this would be by means of a special action of the Special Group.)

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3515-62

USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Tab B

Justification for Strategic Mission: Szechwan Basin

1. In COMOR-D-2/18, forwarded to USIB on 25 June 1962 as USIB-D-41.5/6, COMOR noted that the Secretary of Defense had directed that a comprehensive photo reconnaissance program against selected objectives in China be developed and implemented at the earliest possible date. On 19 July the Director of Central Intelligence presented a review of the results of U-2 reconnaissance on China and recommended that: "We proceed immediately with coverage of the remainder of the strategic targets in Northeast China, completing the task about one-half done by the very successful [redacted] will probably accomplish this. Next it is recommended that the highest priority targets in Central China not previously photographed, principally the Szechwan Basin, be covered. It is possible that [redacted] achieved under optimum conditions, could accomplish this and thereby complete initial coverage of all the highest priority strategic targets in China."

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USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)
Tab B

25X1A 2. In view of the recoverage of Northeast China by

the next most important strategic target area in

Communist China is the Szechwan Basin. This area includes the Yangtze River from Chung King to I-Pin and the Min River from I-Pin to Cheng Tu. This area is considered highly suspect for nuclear energy production because of the availability of electrical power, water, and industrial support. In addition, there are a few suspect military targets of priority interest, on which we have no base photographic coverage. As a bonus, it should be noted that the southern portion of this area contains a few important military targets associated with Chinese Communist support to a North Vietnam buildup.

3. Recommendation: That a mission be approved for coverage of the Szechwan Basin at the earliest opportunity in September.

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3515-62

USIB-D-41.5/14
(COMOR-D-2/20)

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